



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

22ND DEFENDANT PLEADS GUILTY IN METH CONSPIRACY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Mexican citizen living in Kansas City, Kan., pleaded guilty in federal court today to his role in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

Armando Hernandez, 37, a citizen of Mexico living in Kansas City, Kan., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Fernando J. Gaitan this morning to a charge contained in an indictment that was returned by a federal grand jury on Aug. 12, 2004, in Kansas City.

By pleading guilty, **Hernandez** admitted that he conspired with others to distribute methamphetamine between Jan. 1, 2002, and July 12, 2004.

Hernandez is the 22nd co-defendant to plead guilty in this case.

Alberto Balderrama-Sanchez, 33, and **Guillermo Rivera-Corral**, 58, both Mexican citizens living in Kansas City, Mo.; **Samuel R. Contreras**, 25, **John B. Wolf**, 35, **Lewis G. Kilgore**, 28, **Peyton S. Leach**, 27, **Michael D. Ryan**, 31, **Ramon Leopoldo Morales**, 46, and **Rebecca L. Alexander**, 35, all of Kansas City; **Ryan T. Poston**, 25, **Eric J. Banks**, 33, **Bradley E. Jenkins**, 20, all of Grandview; **Michael B. Pedrino**, 27, **Lucas D. Wilson**, 23, **Kelly E. Bunce**, 25, **James M. Winkler**, 30, and **Leonira A. Rodriguez**, 29, all of Independence; **Christopher R. Mays**, 32, of Warrensburg, Mo.; **David J. Perez**, 34, of Kansas City, Kan.; and **Gloria Garcia**, 32, of El Paso, Texas, also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine between Jan. 1, 2002, and July 12, 2004.

Additionally, **Esmeralda I. Mendoza-Mendoza**, 30, a Mexican citizen living in Independence, Mo., pleaded guilty to methamphetamine-related charges.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael S. Oliver. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs

Enforcement, the Kansas City Metropolitan Drug Task Force, the Jackson County, Mo., Drug Task Force, the Independence, Mo., Police Department and the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow